DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 365 016 EC 302 641

AUTHOR Purcell, Nancy Mari
TITLE A Transition Model for Personal Empowerment of Learning Disabled Young Adults Exiting from High School to the Work Force or a Post-Secondary Educational Setting.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 118p.; Ed.D. Practicum Report, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Advocacy; Agency Cooperation; Career Exploration; College Day; Communication Skills; *Cooperative Programs; *Education Work Relationship; Higher Education; High Schools; High School Students; Interpersonal Competence; *Learning Disabilities; Mentors; *Models; Parent Participation; Postsecondary Education; Program Development; Program Implementation; *Transitional Programs; Vocational Evaluation
IDENTIFIERS Empowerment; *Individualized Transition Plans

ABSTRACT

This practicum developed a comprehensive Individual Transition Plan (ITP) model for five high school students with learning disabilities, in which social skills, advocacy, communication skills, career evaluation, and postsecondary concerns were explored through the collaborative efforts of school personnel, community members, outside agencies, the student, and the parents. The practicum involved administration of questionnaires, assisting agencies in career evaluations, executing group and individual sessions with students to enhance interpersonal skills, arranging mentoring relationships, organizing a Career/College Night, and compiling information into a computerized ITP. It was felt that the practicum information was utilized to provide a clear vision of the systematic steps that the learning disabled youngster must take to attain future goals. Appendices contain various questionnaires, skills lists, and ITP forms. (Contains 31 references.) (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
✓ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ED 365 016

A Transition Model for Personal Empowerment of Learning Disabled Young Adults Exiting from High School to the Work Force or a Post-Secondary Educational Setting

by

Nancy Mari Purcell

Cluster XLIV

A Practicum II Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1993

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Nancy Mari Purcell
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

EC 302641

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Janice C. Dennis

Janice Dennis

Director of Special Services

Title

Ocean City, New Jersey

Address

8/14/93

Date

This practicum report was submitted by Nancy Mari Purcell under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

9-12-93

Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary W. Staggs, Ed.D.

Mary Staggs, Ed.D., Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author wishes to acknowledge her indebtedness to the following persons who have contributed so generously in the completion of this practicum.

First, I thank God, who gave the writer the physical strength and intellectual ability to persist in the field of Special Education and the writing of this practicum.

Much gratitude to Janice Dennis, Director of Special Services, for her availability of materials and suggestions concerning this practicum. Appreciation also goes to the Child Study Team.

A special thanks is extended to the five learning disabled students who participated in this practicum.

A sincere thanks to Kathy Jerome, my typist, for her endurance and attention to the many details necessary to finalize this project.

A very special thanks must go to my children, Christine, Anthony and Antoinette, for the cooperation and encouragement they showed the writer as she attempted to complete this practicum.

A sincere thanks to James Mari, brother, Dotti Mari, sister-in-law, Kathleen Kennedy, sister, Joseph Kennedy, brother-in-law, and Gertrude Mari, mother, for their loyalty, support and prayers during the writing of this practicum.

My sincere thanks to Dr. Mary Staggs, my adviser, for her constructive criticisms, encouragement, interest and above all her faith in the writer when she would give up on herself. Her support greatly influenced the finalization of this practicum.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Acknowledgment iii

Table of Contents iv

List of Tables vi

Abstract vii

Chapter

I INTRODUCTION 1

Description of Community 1
Writer's Work Setting and Role 3

II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM 7

Problem Description 7
Problem Documentation 11
Causative Analysis 14
Relationship of the Problem to the Literature 17

III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS 27

Goals and Expectations 27
Expected Outcomes 28
Measurement of Outcomes 30

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY 34

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions 34
Description of Selected Solutions 37
Report of Action Taken 41

V RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 64

Results 64
Discussion 66
Recommendations 76
Dissemination 76

REFERENCES 80

Appendices

A. Student Transition Questionnaire..... 85
B. Parent/Guardian Transition Questionnaire..... 87
C. Social Skills..... 89
D. Grooming Skills..... 91
E. Communication Skills..... 93
F. Individual Transition Plan..... 95
G. Transition.....100
H. Individual Transition Plan - Student M..... 102
I. Career/College Letter..... 108
J. Evaluation for Career Night..... 110

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Results of the GATB and COPS Three Highest Careers..... 47

2 Results of the Career/College Night Evaluation..... 74

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1 Results of the GATB and COPS Three Highest Careers

2 Results of the Career/College Night Evaluation

Abstract

A transition model for personal empowerment of learning disabled young adults exiting from high school to the work force or a post-secondary educational setting. Purcell, Nancy M., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D., Program in Child and Youth Studies. Transition/High School/Learning Disabilities/Career/ College/Social Skills/Volunteer Employment/Interpersonal Skills.

This practicum was designed to develop a comprehensive Individual Transition Plan (ITP) model for learning disabled (LD) high school students. This was performed due to the fact that a brief exit conference in the LD student's senior year left the LD student and his family with a lack of direction, services and hope for employment opportunities or potential secondary educational options which were commensurate with his interests and abilities. Social skills, advocacy and communication training, career evaluation and post-secondary concerns were explored through the collaborative efforts of the school personnel, community members, outside agencies, LD student and parents.

The writer administered questionnaires; assisted agencies in career evaluations; executed group/ individual sessions with LD students to enhance interpersonal skills; arranged volunteer/ mentoring situations; organized a Career/College Night; and compiled information into a viable computerized ITP.

The results indicated that the development of an in-depth ITP provided comprehensive information to parents and the LD students in the areas of post-secondary education options, career/employment opportunities, learning styles and interpersonal skills. This information is utilized to provide a clear vision of the systematic steps the LD student must take to attain his future goals. Parents now had an intricate document with a feasible longitudinal map toward accessible goals for their youngster. The ITP presents the tools for empowerment to the LD youngster to be his own advocate when selecting future career or educational options.

Permission Statement

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do (X) do not ( ) give permission to Nova University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

8/14/93
(date)

Nancy Marie Purcell
(signature)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The school district in which the writer is employed is located in a seashore resort community approximately six miles in length which is dependent upon summer tourism to survive financially. Founded in the late nineteenth century as a Methodist summer retreat, vestiges of that heritage still remain. This community vigorously maintains a strong family orientation and calls itself proudly "The World's Greatest Family Resort."

The winter and year-round population of this community is approximately 17,000. However, from the end of May through the first week in September, this population expands to 100,000 visitors and residents. During the summer months, resort-type businesses provide many jobs on a seasonal basis to the young and old. Year-round major opportunities for employment are

limited to utility companies, the casino industry, real estate, construction, retailing and to a lesser degree professional opportunities in the educational, law and medical careers. With the departure of summer visitors and their rental income, many community property owners attempt to rent their homes at cheaper winter rates. These circumstances produce an influx of students in mid October to an exit at the end of May, representing 24 percent of the high school student body in which the writer is employed.

The school district in this seaside community consists of a primary school (kindergarten through third grades), an intermediate school (fourth through eighth grades), and high school (ninth through twelfth grades). A trailer is necessary for the Special Services Department next to the primary site due to overcrowded conditions in the primary school. In addition, the superintendent, board of education, and Thorough and Efficient (T&E) offices are located in a suite of rooms in a local bank building. This vast network of educational facilities places an enormous financial burden on the entire seaside community.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The high school in which this practicum has taken place has a population of approximately 1,300 students. The ethnic composition of the high school student body is 91 percent white, 6.4 percent black, 1.3 percent Asian, .8 percent Hispanic, and a small mix of other minorities. More than half of the student population in grades nine through twelve is comprised from three neighboring districts. In addition to the traditional educational services at the high school site, students also attend a vocational school twenty-five miles away from the high school. These students attend vocational school on a shared time program. Half the students' day is spent on academic endeavors at the high school, and the other half of the day is spent on vocational training. The high school also includes advanced placement programs, gifted and talented programs, basic skills and special education services.

In grades nine through twelve, the goal is to meet the needs of two basic types of pupils: those interested in high school as preparation for further education, and those for whom high school is the final educational experience. Common to both of these groups

are certain basic subjects required of all students regardless of their goals.

In order to graduate from the writer's high school, a student must accumulate 120 credits, achieve satisfactory scores on the State Basic Skills, the High School Proficiency Test, and proficiencies in mathematics, science, English and social studies.

At the writer's high school, the population of special education students is 148. The standard state and local graduation requirements may be waived for the special education population through their Individual Educational Plan (IEP).

Special education students at the writer's high school may have replacement services of individual subjects in the Learning Resource Center (LRC). They may also experience support, supplemental or in-class support in order to reach their full potential. At the writer's high school setting, there are no self-contained classes. Students in need of intense special needs are currently being provided with an out-of-district program in an accredited special school.

The staff of the high school consists of 3 administrators, 104 teachers, 8 paraprofessionals, 5 clerical personnel, 8 food service people, and 5

custodial and maintenance workers. These individuals are represented by three different unions and professional organizations.

All instructional staff are required to hold a bachelor's degree and a valid state teaching certificate. The average teaching experience is 17 years. Fifty-three percent (53%) of the teachers have a bachelor's degree, forty-two percent (42%) a master's degree and two percent(2%) have doctorates.

The general socioeconomic status of the parents of the students in the high school is middle class with a balance between upper and lower classes. Various students come from homes assessed at $400,000 while others dwell in government supported housing projects. Parents' employment range from professionals, blue collar workers and others on welfare assistance.

Currently, the writer holds a bachelor's degree in special education and a master of education as a Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant (LDT/C). For over fifteen years, the writer has been involved in the education of the special education children and young adults, first as a teacher and presently as a Learning Disabilities Specialist. During this time, the writer has constantly been active in various national

organizations which concentrate their efforts on the issues of the special education population.

The writer frequently speaks at local parent groups or workshops on various aspects of learning disabilities. The writer increases her professional development by attending or sending for pertinent information from workshops, inservices or seminars. This is also encouraged by the writer's school district.

The writer's responsibilities as a Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant at the high school setting include observations of students and programs, developing intervention strategies, consultation with administration, teachers, parents and students, performing formal and informal educational evaluations, collaborating with the guidance personnel in developing schedules, as well as intervening in discipline and absenteeism problems. The writer frequently offers academic and emotional guidance to students as well as parents of learning disabled (LD) students and the regular student body.

The writer is respected in her position as a Learning Disabilities Teacher/Consultant and seen as one who strives to prepare disabled students for a successful transition from school to work or higher education.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem at the writer's high school was that there was no longitudinal plan prescribed for the learning disabled youth. The implications for a smoother, more in-depth longitudinal transitional plan is inherent in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 1990). However, a successful system of transitional program and services depends upon the continuous coordination of services by various agencies that are involved in education, community, living skills and employment programs.

A simple checklist was filled out by the case manager, but no extensive career/vocational assessment or follow-up was implemented.

Visible handicaps such as blindness, hearing or physical handicaps were considered the only handicaps worthy of transition techniques. Learning disabilities

are not visible and the life-long ramifications are frequently not understood by professionals, prospective employers or post-secondary educational leaders (Okolo, 1988;.

Parents of disabled young adults, in a national study, reported that the life cycle stages of adolescence and the transition into young adulthood created a very real sense of stress and anxiety in the family structure (Turnbull and Turnbull, 1986). The parents and young adults at the writer's high school were yearning for more information and guidance long before graduation from high school. Furthermore, parents of disabled young adolescents and young adults require comprehensive information on a magnitude of issues besides academic and behavior concerns. Career opportunities, post-secondary vocations, social skills, life skills, sexual information and peer relationships are but a few matters which parents of disabled adolescents must handle in unique fashions as compared to the general population.

Valdiviesso (1991), the director of the National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY) stated, "One of the most critical turning points in the lives of young people is the

transition from public school to the world of post-secondary education, employment, and life as an adult. Developing independence, exploring one's talents and interests, deciding upon a career path, and pursuing either employment or additional schooling are just some of the challenges that youth in transition face" (p. 1).

Rusch and Phelps (1987) suggested that a major effort is needed to establish effective interventions that will help individuals with disabilities make gains in the work world and a contribution to society. There has been a call for the transition movement to effect a greater impact on the quality of life for all adults with handicapping conditions (Brown, 1987, and Halpern, 1985).

Teachers, especially special education teachers, can unknowingly contribute to an unsuccessful transition. At the writer's high school, teachers have frequently been too nurturing with the learning disabled adolescents and fail to prepare them to be their own advocates especially in stressful situations. The Child Study Team members perpetuated this powerless facade when the strengths and weaknesses of the young adult were not discussed and explained to him as well as the consequences of these disabilities in regard to his

future plans. Due to this nurturing the learning disabled adolescent did not develop a work ethic necessary for transition into work and/or post-secondary education.

From an opposite perspective, the guidance personnel at the writer's work site have not understood the characteristics of the learning disabled youngster and frequently feel it is a waste of their time to investigate post educational opportunities with them. This transition service was designated to the Child Study Team case manager.

Briefly stated, given the characteristics, problems and needs of young adults with learning disabilities, it was imperative to implement a transitional plan as part of the components of the IDEA. The problem at the writer's work site was a lack of a coordinated effort between the Child Study Team (CST), school personnel and various agencies to produce a longitudinal plan to insure a successful transition from high school to the work force, trade school or post-secondary education for learning disabled high school youngsters. Testing of LD youngsters generally included an academic and psychological assessment but was devoid of an aptitude and career interest inventory to be included in the

critical decision-making process concerning potential vocational and higher educational goals.

Consequently, at the writer's work site the learning disabled youngsters and their families were left with a lack of direction, services and hope for employment opportunities or potential secondary educational options which were commensurate with their abilities and interests.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of a need for but a lack of an in-depth longitudinal transitional plan as mandated by P.L. 94-142 The Education for All Handicapped Children Act and highlighted in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA, 1990) was documented through observation, interviews, questionnaires and evaluations.

A questionnaire given to the learning disabled students in grades 10 and 11 concerning future goals revealed that youngsters had limited ideas of what they wanted to do in the future or their aspirations did not correlate with their academic abilities. These same youngsters had no idea of courses or training which might better prepare them for their desired goal (see Appendix A).

A questionnaire filled out by parents of learning disabled youngsters indicated their concern for a lack of systematic longitudinal planning for their young adult (see Appendix B). They felt the Individual Educational Plan (IEP) addressed current issues but did not set a course for future employment or post-secondary education. The youngster was marking time, but no clear attainable goal was foreseen. The parents of the older students were very concerned that once their youngster graduated, they would be on their own and no services would be available, and if available, the parents were ignorant to their function or location.

Currently no vocational aptitude or career interest assessment was given in a systematic manner with follow-up concerning the results. Informal observational checklists given to teachers of LD youngsters focusing on social, communication and grooming skills as indicators for job success, as well as interviews at the senior exit conference have indicated the need for career development with longitudinal planning for future success (see Appendices C, D, and E).

The guidance professionals in the writer's work site upon interview stated they neither understand the obscure characteristics of learning disabled students

beyond their academic deficits nor did they have time to explore post-secondary opportunities for this population of the high school.

Investigation by the writer through networking with the business community and the questioning of parents in the parent support group revealed that at the writer's school there was no volunteer connection with the community where learning disabled young adults could be monitored by an employee in a career field in which they may be interested. This connection would develop a series of successful life experiences and sense of the responsibility necessary in the adult world (NICHY, September 1991).

Even though in October 1990 the IDEA was signed by President Bush which mandated the cooperation of interagencies to work with secondary schools to prepare a viable transition plan, few inservice workshops had been executed to specifically address the issues of the learning disabled. The one workshop which was initiated focused on the severely mentally retarded. This neglect of formal training constrains the proper implementation of transition procedures.

Combining the information from questionnaires of parents and teachers, conversations with guidance

personnel, parents and LD students, the evidence was overwhelming in favor of implementing a more complex Individual Transition Plan (ITP) as mandated by the IDEA issued in 1991 by President Bush.

With the confirmation of the inadequate transitional plan at the writer's work site, the stage was set to combine forces and rise to the challenge to secure this weak link and develop a comprehensive Individual Transitional Plan.

Causative Analysis

The causes for a lack of an in-depth longitudinal coordinated transition plan prescribed for the learning disabled young adults in the writer's work site were varied in importance.

One of the main reasons for this dilemma was that this Individual Transition Plan (ITP) was mandated without training of those who are responsible for its implementation.

To be in compliance with the IDEA, the schools are to coordinate vocational, continuing education and community agencies to produce an outcome based evaluation and result. Most school personnel are not aware of the duties of these outside agencies or the extent to which they should be involved.

Without a concerted effort between the educational forum, community channels and various governmental agencies, the services rendered to the learning disabled would be limited, thus hindering their true potential once they depart from high school.

> Data strongly suggests that to have the LD young adult reach his true employment potential, special education must re-examine its role in preparing LD young adults for the world of work and cooperate with other agencies and disciplines who are also involved in the transition process. (Okolo, p. 294)

A second cause for a lack of a smooth transition from high school was the fact that school guidance personnel didn't hold the learning disabled young adult in high priority; therefore, they were reluctant to intensely investigate post-secondary educational opportunities for the learning disabled. This task was relegated to the CST case managers who were unfamiliar with the post-secondary systems and requirements.

Evelo and Price (1991) delineated a model of interagency cooperation that focused on long-term planning. In this model, transition counseling services begin in high school related to career exploration,

completion of financial aid forms, and applications to colleges that are a suitable match given the students' strengths and weaknesses.

A third difficulty with the current ITP was at the writer's work site there was no aptitude or career interest evaluation given to the learning disabled youngsters in order to plan a systematic program to mesh academic interest and aptitude for future employment or post-secondary education. By implementing a transitional plan, assessment would take on a more global aspect. Areas to be considered would include: vocational preferences, vocational training, necessary post-secondary education, as well as academic ability. If this testing were performed early in the LD youngster's high school career, a longitudinal approach could be generated, producing a comprehensive profile initiating a productive future.

Lastly, parents and learning disabled young adults were not aware of the complexity of the transition element of the IEP and IDEA and did not know where to search for services. Opportunities must be made available to parents as well as the LD young adult to be exposed to agencies, schools and employers who can

enhance their future development. This requires intense planning and coordination of the personnel involved.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

By 1995, the first full generation of students with handicapping conditions will have completed their schooling under P.L. 94-142. Currently over 60 percent of all students in special education are between the ages of 14 and 21. "The U.S. Congress has recognized the need for transition services for approximately 300,000 youths with handicaps who leave school each year. To begin to solve these problems, recent legislation has authorized support for research in effective transition strategies and the establishment of model demonstration projects to develop and test these strategies" (Fact Sheet: Spring 1991, p. 4).

The critical need for transitional training programs for individuals with handicaps has been identified by educators and professionals in the field of special education and vocational rehabilitation since the early seventies (Posthill, 1991).

Up until the mid 1970's special education programs for the handicapped youngster were developed at the elementary level, but few school districts provided extensive programs at the secondary schools. Before the

passage of P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, only a small body of literature specifically addressed the characteristics and needs of adolescents with learning disabilities. "These disabilities were not considered a unique population with specific characteristics and programming needs" (Zigmond, 1990, p. 2). For this segment of children, little thought was given to developing transitional plans for their exit from secondary settings even though section 6:28-4.7 of the P.L. 94-142 addressed "transition" (Zigmond, 1990, p. 2).

When they "graduated," these youngsters entered jobs in sheltered workshops or in family businesses, lived at home and for the most part, remained dependent on their families. There were outside agencies which assisted families in receiving limited medical and financial benefits, but a concerted effort between the school, state and federal facilities was lacking.

In September of 1983, the United States Office of the Inspector General surveyed 252 people in 28 different states about the problems and the program models for the transition of developmentally disabled young adults from school to adult services (Lehr, 1985). The Committee reported that the school districts were

solely responsible for facilitating programs for the handicapped students while they were in school. Once they left school either from "graduation" or "dropping out," the schools did not develop a link between outside agencies, vocational training or post-schools for the handicapped students. The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) contained goals and objectives to remediate developmental delays in the academic areas but did not focus on goals for entrance into the community. No one was responsible for an IEP after the youngster "graduated." Parents were left with many questions concerning their youngster's opportunities to learn, have a decent job, live in the community, enjoy a social life and become semi-independent or totally independent of family support.

As a result of these conditions and deficits in the system, P.L. 98-199, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments in 1983 redefined the need to establish services to facilitate the transition from school to work for youths with disabilities.

A few years later in 1986, P.L. 98-524, The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act was enacted. According to the Perkins Act, handicapped and disadvantaged students enrolled in vocational educational programs

must receive assessment of vocational interests, adaptation of facilities, equipment, curriculum, and counseling services that will assist transition from school to post-school employment (Elksnin, 1991, p. 216).

Despite these efforts by Congress to provide vocational training and transitional services to the handicapped, the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities by Harris and Associates (1986) indicated that less than 25 percent of all working-aged individuals with disabilities in the United States were employed full-time, and an additional 10 percent were employed part-time. Persons with learning disabilities experience significant unemployment or underemployment as adults (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Hudson, et al., 1988; Rusch & Phelps, 1987).

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (1989) reported that the average wage for these youths was $4.35 an hour. In the same report, of 1,265 youths who had exited school, 8 percent were attending a college or university and 8 percent were attending a post-secondary vocational or trade school. Hasazi (1985) found that merely participating in vocational education was not

associated with better employment outcomes for resource room students. Although vocational education can provide specific vocational skill training, it does not simultaneously address the work habits and attitudes that are equally critical to employment success.

In 1990, the congress amended the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 and changed the name to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act. This new law expanded the term "special populations" to include individuals with disabilities. It now concentrated resources on improving educational programs leading to the academic and occupational skill competencies needed to work in a technologically advanced society.

In October, 1990, Congress passed and President Bush signed into law, the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990 (P.L. 101-476). The revised name of the law is the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA has revised EHA in many aspects; however, one of the main focuses is that of the component of transition. This law includes transition services and assistive technology services which must be included in a child's IEP. Rehabilitation counseling and social work services will be included as related

services as well as one-time grant programs aimed at improving transition services (NICHCY, 1991).

What type of education best suits the person's interests and capabilities, where such training is available, what are the eligibility requirements, how to finance the education, and where to secure a job are only a few issues to be addressed in a transition plan (NICHCY, September 1991). The learning disabled young adult and his family require assistance before he graduates and is no longer entitled to the special services of his school district.

Under the new definition of "transition" as dictated in IDEA, assessment is thought of in a global perspective. In order to insure success in the selection of the student's post-secondary outcomes, assessment is imperative in the cognitive, academic, communication, community life, social skills, previous/current employment, leisure/recreation and adaptive behavioral domains. Child Study Team members must define who has pertinent information regarding the student's strengths/weaknesses and preferences in the home, school, work and community setting. This requires the cooperation and motivation of many individuals. The main focus of assessing these domains is to determine

competencies which may facilitate or hinder the youngster's transition from high school to adult life.

These assessments are developed from a functional viewpoint rather than simply a developmental model of academic skills and limited progress over the year. Interwoven in this law is the concept that education must be more practical and useful if these youngsters are to function in the real world of life. This plan calls for a home assessment and community assessment to determine such skills as personal grooming, hygiene, participation in chores, ability to use public transportation, personal banking, restaurant skills and use of recreational facilities.

It is important to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses in the social behavior domain because there is a strong correlation between job success and interpersonal skills. The disabled youngster may experience difficulty with participating in a job interview, accepting criticism from an employer, and explaining a problem to a supervisor (Okolo, 1988).

Aune (1991) noted that students who participate in LD Transition Projects have better study habits, are more knowledgeable about post-secondary options, have an ability to request the accommodations they need, and are

aware of their learning disabilities including their strengths and weaknesses.

Roffman (1991) and Payne (1991) noted in their presentations at the LDA Conference that without complex social, vocational and academic skills one would have difficulties in both the work world and also in establishing a household environment apart from their family home. LD adolescents must be given the opportunity to learn and rehearse skills in order for them to internalize and transfer these messages into their vocational environment at a later time (Fad, 1990).

Individuals with learning disabilities experience difficulty in making career decisions if left to their own self-advocacy due to the fact they have a clouded sense of their strengths, weaknesses, interests and values. This leads to unrealistic job expectations (Okolo, 1988; Rojewski, 1992; and Rosenthal, 1989). Vocational interests, aptitude and academic assessment must be explained to the learning disabled young adult with self-advocacy as one of the final outcomes.

Okolo (1988), Posthill & Roffman (1991), and Rojewski (1992) suggested that a major effort is needed to establish effective interventions that will help

individuals with disabilities succeed in the work world and be a benefit to society. Indeed, Siegel and Gaybold-Ross (1991) declared that "the employment of persons with mild disabilities is one of the most pressing social problems in our society. The high rate of unemployment and underemployment for this group presage unacceptable social costs" (p. 45).

In order to prepare the learning disabled young adult for his eventual employment, volunteer-type work in the community could offer him a sense of responsibility and work ethic as well as increase his self-confidence.

"Volunteer type of programs offer personal enrichment to young learning disabled adults and enhances their independence, self-advocacy skills, and their ability to make informed choices about further education and careers. Volunteering enables a student or adult with a disability to develop a work history and can lead to paid employment. Volunteering permits the learning disabled young adult to gain experience in several career areas as part of career exploration and selection" (NICHCY, September 1991, p. 20).

This type of reciprocal exchange between community members and the learning disabled young adult would also

help eradicate the negative and erroneous image the learning disabled population is faced with on a daily basis.

Under the new transition plan, inter-agency cooperation and coordination by members of the school Child Study Team is critical to decreasing the disheartening number of unemployed and underemployed as well as drop-outs from college. The transitional component of the IDEA is a refreshing approach to a stagnating system. It stimulates creativity between many parties and above all gives hope to families and the young learning disabled adult for future success in the community.

The initial concept of a comprehensive Individual Transitional Plan is a commendable venture and one which over the next three or four years will be well established and fruitful in the writer's work site.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following primary goal and objectives were projected for this practicum. The primary goal was to develop an in-depth Individual Transitional Plan (ITP) model to be implemented for learning disabled high school students. The goals of transition are to ensure uninterrupted services and to determine plausible adult outcomes for future employment or secondary education. Transition planning enhances current educational programs and offers hope for the future through longitudinal strategies.

One objective was that the targeted students would demonstrate appropriate social, grooming, advocacy and communication skills for vocational and post-secondary educational success, which would ultimately lead to optimum functioning in the community.

A second objective was that the students would be evaluated to determine academic ability, aptitude and career interests which would assist them to develop realistic goals commensurate with these results.

Expected Outcomes

The Individual Educational Plan (IEP) traditionally contained goals and objectives to remediate developmental delays in the academic areas but did not focus on goals for entrance into the community. No one was responsible for an IEP after the young adult graduated. Parents were left with many questions concerning their youngster's opportunities to learn on a post-secondary level, have a decent job, live semi-independently or totally independently of family support and enjoy a social life.

As a result of this void, at the writer's work site the writer anticipated that during the period of eight months a comprehensive Individual Transitional Plan (ITP) would be developed for five learning disabled young adults participating in this practicum. The ITP would encompass current levels of abilities, vocational interests, and an inclusive feasible longitudinal map toward accessible work or post-secondary education ambitions. This ITP would contain specific components

to fulfill state requirements as well as elements indigenous to the LD population.

In addition, during the period of eight months the writer would organize five to seven group and/or individual meetings with the learning disabled participants. It was hoped that through these sessions the learning disabled students would acquire an awareness of their learning styles, as well as their social, communication, advocacy and work ethic skills. Students would also be encouraged to explore vocational and educational options that concurred with their new-found interpersonal knowledge.

In an effort to attain relevance to the transition skills and insights they had developed, it was expected that the learning disabled students and their parents would attend a College/Career Night at the writer's work site.

The last culminating activity anticipated through this practicum would be the conveying of the results, which were discovered over eight months, in a written Individual Transition Plan document with the parents and the learning disabled young adults. In the future, this model would be explored early in the learning disabled student's high school career so as to prepare his high

school curriculum to be commensurate with his aspirations and abilities. This type of foresight would also permit the proper personnel to assist the learning disabled young adult to cultivate the interpersonal skills which may need developing or sharpening before he is ready to exit from high school.

Measurement of Outcomes

The major goal of developing a comprehensive Individual Transition Plan model was measured by the completion of a computerized form integrated into the Individual Educational Plan. The ITP portion has unique goals, objectives and responsibility components pertinent to the eventual successful exit of the LD student from high school. A transition questionnaire was generated by the writer to procure current information to be used as a baseline to determine concerns and address any deficits noted by the selected population (see Appendices A and B). These questionnaires had to be completed by all five participants and their families in order to assess progress over an eight-month period and formulate an appropriate ITP. Various techniques and activities were then utilized to remediate deficits and enhance capabilities.

Utilizing this new prevailing information which encompassed current levels on many arenas, it was possible to provide the LD student with a clear vision of the systematic steps he must take to attain his future milestones. The objective of the development of the ITP was met with the culmination of the document at a meeting with the parents and the LD student where a picture was painted which focused on future potential and possibilities as well as the empowerment of the LD student to be his own advocate when selecting future career or educational options. It was emphasized that this ITP was a working document which would be modified when necessary to satisfy the student's needs to enrich his ultimate transition from high school.

The acquisition of interpersonal skills is an essential component for the ultimate success of the LD young adult to compete in the academic or employment world after high school. To satisfy this objective, the writer required each LD participant to attend a minimum of five group or individual sessions throughout this practicum experience. The writer organized these group and individual meetings to initially focus on communication, grooming, and social skills. Additional topics were implemented as the discussions proceeded

over time. A pre- and post-assessment checklist was developed and completed by the LD student, teachers and/or parents to determine areas of concern as well as to be used as a benchmark to ascertain future growth (see Appendices C, D and E). Attendance was overwhelmingly positive at the individual sessions between the writer and the LD students. Informal and formal observations of the transfer of newfound abilities in school, home and work setting, as well as the techniques and discussions in the sessions were documented and provided the input for the original Individual Transition Plans for the five learning disabled participants.

The last objective to evaluate academic ability and career interests to determine realistic goals was measured by the actual administration of various standardized testing instruments to all five LD participants by the representative of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and the writer in her capacity as a learning disabilities specialist. Additional components to develop practical career goals were the participation in a volunteer employment experience and the attendance at a College/Career Night at the writer's work site.

All these activities and selected measurable outcomes were performed with the perception of more self knowledge, leading to a comprehensive transitional blueprint being implemented for the LD students.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

The problem at the writer's work site is a lack of a coordinated effort between the Child Study Team, school personnel and various agencies to produce a longitudinal plan in the form of an Individual Transition Plan to insure a successful transition from high school to the work force, technical school or post-secondary education for learning disabled high school youngsters.

Adolescence is the time of transition from childhood to adulthood. There is a normal disharmony which exists during adolescence. This period can be chaotic for both the adolescent and his entire family. Weiss (1974) found that "add to this disharmony of a 'normal' adolescent the complicating factors of living with constant questions about one's intelligence, self-

worth, peer group status, and stability and you have a far more vulnerable emotional state in the learning disabled adolescent" (p. 55).

Parents of learning disabled young adults require advice on many critical issues, not only academic or behavioral problems which are focused in the Individual Educational Plan. A more comprehensive approach in the form of an Individual Transitional Plan was required to address employment issues and post-secondary education, options for the learning disabled young adult. This ITP should be extended over the entire four years of high school with an emphasis for successful exit into the real world either as an employable individual or one prepared for post-secondary trade school or academic ambitions.

A review of the literature which addressed solutions revealed that persons with learning disabilities experience significant unemployment or underemployment as adults (Haring, Lovett, & Smith, 1990; Hasazi, Gordon, & Roe, 1985; Hudson et al., 1988; Rusch & Phelps, 1987). Rusch and Phelps (1987) suggested that a major effort was needed to establish effective interventions that would help individuals with disabilities make gains in the work world and a

contribution to society. There has been a call for the transition movement to effect a greater impact on the quality of life for all adults with handicapping conditions (Brown, 1987; Halpern, 1985). "Data strongly suggested that to have the LD young adult reach his true employment potential special education must re-examine its role in preparing LD young adults for the world of work and cooperate with other agencies and disciplines who are also involved in the transition process" (Okolo, p. 294).

By 1990, 12,084 persons with learning disabilities (54%) were directly served through the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) to participate in transitional demonstration projects. This was done in an effort to more effectively prepare the learning disabled population for life as capable individuals who would have the skills to be independent, productive citizens.

In addition to a comprehensive ITP, the writer has learned from the research by Hasazi (1985) that merely participating in vocational education does not necessarily equate better employment skills for the learning disabled. A solution to this dilemma was the creation of a volunteer work situation where the

learning disabled young adult would experience exposure to real life employment situations under the guidance of empathic individuals who would stress work ethics in a safe, mature environment. Group/individual meetings were simultaneously held to reinforce communication, social, grooming and advocacy skills to enhance the LD's employability.

The culmination of activities for the writer's practicum took place with a Career/College Night. The writer anticipated this event would permit parents and learning disabled young adults to discuss career options and higher education opportunities. This type of forum was not previously available to the learning disabled population; therefore, this unique experience offered a sense of hope for a more productive future for this population.

Description of Selected Solutions

Currently at the writer's work site there was no longitudinal plan prescribed for the learning disabled young adult. The implications for a smoother, more in-depth longitudinal transitional plan was inherent in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1991. However, an inclusive effort combining outside agencies

and the educational environment was not developed at the writer's high school and as a consequence a simple checklist with limited effectiveness was the only document available to parents and the learning disabled young adult.

Parents of learning disabled young adults expressed through a questionnaire that the IEP addressed academic and behavioral issues but did not set a course for future employment or post-secondary education.

The writer investigated several transitional plans currently in effect to develop a model for her school district. Evelo and Price (1991) delineated a model of interagency cooperation that focused on long-term planning. In this model, transition counseling services began in high school and included objectives such as vocational assessment, personal goal setting, information gathering about post-secondary options, job shadowing and interviewing as they related to career exploration, completion of financial aid forms, and application to colleges that were a suitable match given the students' strengths and weaknesses (Brinckerhoff, 1992, p. 420).

Aune (1991) suggested a similar transition model, the LD Transition Project. It was noted that students

who participate in LD Transition Projects had better study habits, were more knowledgeable about post-secondary options, had an ability to request the accommodations they need, and were aware of their learning disability including their strengths and weaknesses.

Boston had initiated the Technical Assistance for Parent Programs (TAPP), Virginia had developed Virginia's Approach to Services for Transitioning Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities (Project VAST), and Florida started the Transitional Adjustment Program. All these programs had as their goal the preparation of disabled young adults, through intensive transition initiatives, to enter the work world or post-secondary education and become successful citizens in all aspects of their lives.

The writer was prepared to develop an in-depth Individual Transitional Plan for five learning disabled students at the writer's high school.

A collaborative vocational testing with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Learning Disabilities Consultant was to be performed to investigate academic abilities, plus aptitude and career interests. This was to be done to develop realistic

goals combining academic and career interests. The writer has found over the years many learning disabled young adults either underestimate or overestimate their abilities and as a consequence frequently fail in their future endeavors. These results would be explained to the LD young adult and his parents with self-advocacy as one of the final outcomes.

In order to develop job-related skills, self-advocacy and social skills, the writer conducted six group/individual sessions. In addition, exploration of a possible volunteer situation for the learning disabled young adult was extended throughout the community. For the learning disabled young adult who demonstrates the interest and ability for higher education, the writer was prepared to utilize the computer software in the guidance office to investigate possible colleges which service the learning disabled. It was imperative that this information be explored early in the student's high school career so as to prepare his future curriculum to be commensurate with his aspirations.

A Career/College Night for parents and LD young adults was held to stimulate and motivate interest in a variety of occupations as well as higher education opportunities. Having face-to-face conversations with

representatives of colleges and agencies helps to answer the questions of parents and their youngster in a non-threatening environment.

Lastly, each LD young adult and his parents received an intricate ITP which was integrated into the IEP, matching his abilities with his career interests avoiding unrealistic expectations and possible failure caused by a lack of self-knowledge. These plans were made with concrete projected outcomes which parents, LD students and involved professionals agree upon and were willing to work toward.

Report of Action Taken

In order to develop a comprehensive Individual Transition Plan model, the writer first found it necessary to network with her local professionals as well as professionals from various other states to gain a framework to create a viable ITP. This ITP would replace the simple "exit conference" which was currently utilized in the writer's high school. The writer's investigation revealed that some states had very well defined transition plans already in place; however, locally, most neighboring districts either had no transition plan or simply had a similar senior "exit" conference with the learning disabled student and

attending parents, which only emphasized credit completion and a statement as to whether the young LD adult had a job or may be attending school. No previous or future plans were in action. The writer also discovered that most often the essence of the ITPs which were reviewed were tailored for the cognitively limited, or the physically, visually or auditorially impaired individual. These youngsters indeed have specific needs to be addressed early in their life to prepare them and their families for future events. However, with the learning disabled young adult, the writer was concerned with different but equally as important future goals. It then became apparent that many of the sample ITPs she had collected were not appropriate for her selected population. The initial step, therefore, would be to develop original goals indigenous to the learning disabled population but inclusive of the topic areas mandated by the state in which the writer resides.

Secondly, in accordance with the IDEA and ADA of 1990, activities would be specified which involved outside agencies and community members in addition to the school environment.

Finally, coordinated goals would be developed within an outcome-oriented process which encompassed the

LD student's needs and preference toward eventual departure from school to various types of employment or educational institutes.

Fortunately for the writer, her school has an excellent computer system with the capacity to increase the existing IEP data. This proved to be essential to developing the ITP. From documentation of informal conversations with special education and regular education teachers, Child Study Team members, reviewing ITPs from other districts and states along with the writer's own experiences working with LD adolescents, goals and objectives were selected to be embodied into the original IEP under the title of ITP. The writer also wanted to provide credence and responsibility to the ITP and not have it become simply a checklist reviewed each year with no credible substance. To avoid this, the writer implemented a narrative component which addressed the areas to be cultivated and improved upon. The notable attributes of this narrative are the emphasis on the recommendations, person or persons responsible for the plan and finally a viable time line in which to implement the designated transition goals. This ITP would be reviewed and revised at least once a year as an element of the IEP. The final data for the

ITP became the framework for the next steps of this practicum (see Appendix F).

Once this embryonic shell of the ITP was in print, the writer realized that she had many questions concerning her LD students. It would be a challenge to build a bridge between the current sterile high school curriculum and create a link between outside agencies and community members to assure a successful transition to the adult world. To be effective the ITP should identify anticipated post-school outcomes and develop a roadmap of transitional services to attain these goals. In order to intricately plan for the future, a thorough assessment of current levels was needed for the LD students on a variety of areas not only academic abilities. Future aspirations, previous employment, hobbies, and the ability to communicate and advocate with peers and adults in an appropriate manner were but a few unknown territories to be explored.

The main focus of assessing these domains was to determine competencies which may facilitate or hinder the LD youngster's transition from high school to adult life. These assessments were developed from a functional viewpoint rather than simply a developmental model of academic skills and limited progress over the

year. Interwoven in the IDEA is the concept that education must be more practical and useful if these youngsters are to function in the real world of life.

From past experience working with learning disabled young adults, the writer was cognizant of the fact that frequently early in their high school career learning disabled students either have lofty career goals or have internalized such a poor self-concept, due to their disability, that they fail to believe they are capable of having any careers beyond menial employment. To circumvent these attitudes and create an accurate picture of current academic and vocational aptitude abilities, the writer contacted a representative from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to assess the five participants with the General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB). This person was trained in the methods of administering this assessment. Before any formal testing took place, a letter of explanation was sent to the parent with a return signed permission slip (see Appendix G). The GATB is a comprehensive evaluation which investigates vocational aptitudes such as form and spatial perception, motor coordination, finger and manual dexterity, as well as verbal and numerical aptitudes. The GATB is a group or

individually administered test. In this case, the writer had all five LD youngsters as a group after school to take the test. This was done because the GATB takes two and a half hours to administer and these youngsters could not miss that much of their high school academic day. According to standardization, participants must be at the sixth grade level or higher in reading and math. This was validated by the writer in her role as an LDT/C. While the test was being administered, the writer was recording the perseverance, work stamina, reaction to changes in tasks, request for assistance, reaction to comments by the evaluator, appropriateness of interaction with student "co-workers" as well as any complaints. These findings would be shared with the LD students at later individual sessions.

Since the results from the GATB are measurements of interest areas based on the levels of aptitudes and these do not always strongly coincide with the interests of the person, the writer also administered the COPSystem Interest Inventory (COPS). This task was completed in individual sessions throughout the school year.

The COPS Interest Inventory is a career awareness process which relates the interest of the participant to 14 cluster careers. Each cluster career is then dissected further into groups of related occupations. Combining the profiles from both these assessments, it was possible to ascertain realistic concepts of the LD young adult's career goals and begin to delineate his assets and deficits to reaching his ultimate goal. Secondly, together the writer and the LD young adult could create a blueprint in the form of the ITP to plan for his career.

Table 1

Results of the GATB and COPS Three Highest Careers

Student 1

GATB

Interest Area	Interest Scale
Scientific	High
Protective	High
Accommodations	Average

COPS

Cluster	Rank
Science Professional	First choice
Service	Second choice
Science Skilled	Third choice

Student 2

GATB

Interest Area	Interest Scale
Plants and Animals	High
Humanitarian	High
Scientific	Average

COPS

Cluster	Rank
Arts Professional	First choice
Business	Second choice
Service Professional	Third choice

Student 3

GATB

Interest Area	Interest Scale
Protective	High
Artistic	High
Mechanical	High

COPS

Cluster	Rank
Arts Professional	First choice
Communications	Second choice
Service Professional	Third choice

Student 4

GATB

Interest Area	Interest Scale
Accommodating	Average
Artistic	High
Business Detail	Average

COPS

Cluster	Rank
Arts Professional	First choice
Business Professional	Second choice
Communications	Third choice

Student 5

GATB

Interest Area	Interest Scale
Accommodating	High
Business	Average
Humanitarian	Average

COPS

Cluster	Rank
Science Skilled	First choice
Service Professional	Second choice
Business	Third choice

Simply obtaining knowledge concerning the learning disabled young adult's aptitude and interest toward a particular career was not enough information to develop an intense ITP. Other more difficult to assess, interpersonal and academically related skills required investigation. For transition services to truly be effective preparation in social skills, communication

and advocacy skills, learning styles and daily living skills are but a few of the non-traditional areas which must be focused upon. Just as it is imperative that the interests and preferences of the LD young adult are an integral part of the ITP, life functional skills must be addressed in order that the LD young adult learn to perform these skills in an appropriate manner to meet the demands of adult life. The writer therefore concluded that an informal ecological type of questionnaire would provide the impetus to set the stage for the gathering of information necessary to begin the actual transition process for the LD student to eventually assume his responsibility of adulthood. The writer requested that parents, the LD participants, and teachers complete the questionnaires to ascertain the areas of strengths and weaknesses to be later discussed and remediated at group/individual sessions with the writer's direction (see Appendices A, B, C, D and E). Respondents were requested to either actually observe the adolescent performing the skill or recall from past experience the LD adolescent's performance.

The results from the parents and teachers were not formidable. Over the years the writer has spoken at length to both groups and had a general idea of their

concerns. Weaknesses in areas of social skills, responsibility to school work and home tasks, communicating their needs in an appropriate manner, obtaining or keeping a job as well as having a poor self-esteem and a feeling of wanting to be "normal" by the adolescent were not new dilemmas for the writer to hear from parents or teachers. However, the lack of knowledge the parents had concerning post-secondary educational placements as well as problems their son/daughter might encounter in an employment situation due to his/her disability were startling. The parents were naive and anxious all at the same time and looking to the school system to provide assistance. In some cases, they wanted a "miracle" for the stigma of the learning disability to disappear after graduation. This type of thinking only reinforced the enormous importance of developing an in-depth ITP presenting guidelines for the parents as well as the LD student to make a successful transition from high school to adult life.

An analysis of the LD students' responses indicated that they were less guarded and all had a degree of adventure which is characteristic of the adolescent period. All had a vague sense of why they were receiving special education services from "being slow or

dumb" to "requiring help in reading or math." Two youngsters received one period a day, two others received two periods a day, and one participant received three periods a day of special services. The results of this questionnaire also revealed that these youngsters had not been instructed as to what their learning styles were and how unique learning accommodations could enhance their academic performance.

All five youngsters expected to graduate and all wanted to continue their education. Three students were in a college preparatory program, one in business and one in general studies. Four students, two sophomores and two juniors, had not given much consideration to any assistance they may require at a post-secondary institute. The senior knew from previous conversations with the writer that she would require assistance with any math endeavors. She also would need extra time to copy lecture notes or take written tests due to the fact she has cerebral palsy and is limited in her ability to write quickly. She had already been taught to type with one hand since she has limited use of one hand. The writer was pleased that this young lady could verbalize her needs but was concerned as to the local community

college she intended to attend and the possibility of adequate services.

Three of the LD participants were involved in the band, school plays, chorus and various clubs in the high school. One young lady was involved in field hockey. One young man had no school affiliation or community activities. He also had only one younger friend with whom he associated.

Two young adults had infrequent seizures but still took medication occasionally.

All the LD young adults stated they had chores but frequently needed to be reminded or assisted by a parent.

By this time, the writer had accrued sufficient information to add substance to the original draft of the ITP. An ITP was developed for each LD young adult to be utilized as a working document subject to change as the outcome based goals were modified commensurate with the maturity and progress of the LD young adult (see Appendix H).

By utilizing this format and focusing on the whole person involving many disciplines and people, it is possible to develop a sense of empowerment and control

in the learning disabled young adult over his life and choices for the future.

Using the input from the informal ecological questionnaires, career interest/aptitude evaluations as well as current information from CST records, the writer began her group/individual sessions. These sessions were held on the average of once a week during a study hall or study skills class. This did not interrupt the regular academic day of the LD youngster. Due to scheduling difficulties, the writer was only able to have one group session with all the participants in attendance. On other occasions, the writer met either individually or in small two- or three-member group sessions. The size of the group never affected the productivity of the sessions. It was not unusual for the writer to speak about a topic from various prospectives or revisit a topic at a later time. All the participants attended the sessions willingly and appeared to enjoy and learn from the various discussions and techniques. If the writer had a group of two or three members and only one member required remediation on a given topic, the other two members could reschedule or stay and assist the writer either in a role playing activity, or offer suggestions as to how they handled

similar situations or simply bring support to a friend. Two LD youngsters found it helpful to keep a little notebook with suggestions. At other times, the writer actually had outlines or worksheets to emphasize a concept.

The general topics consisted of career planning, employment skills, social skills, grooming skills, communication and advocacy skills and learning styles.

Each LD youngster received the results of the GATB and COPS. These were then used as the starting point for discussion. Using the COPS Career Planning Guide, the individual was compelled to anticipate what steps he must take in order to reach his goal. Discussions centered around skills to perform this occupation, as well as courses or activities which they should be currently pursuing. Future vocational or post-secondary education as well as possible volunteer or actual employment in the chosen field were realistically researched. In addition, some suggestions as to places to find related information were given to the LD youngster to share with his parents.

For some of the LD youngsters, this exercise caused them anxiety. The writer then found it necessary to discuss the advantage of establishing short- and long-

term goals, sustaining energy and perseverance on a task and most importantly viewing their life prospects in an optimistic manner. These realities were reiterated many times during the sessions.

Numerous sessions were devoted to social skills, communication and advocacy skills. Due to deficits of varying degrees of severity in these areas, learning disabled students are at a risk of being social rejects and isolates. These skills must be taught in order for the LD young adult to make lasting relationships as an adult. Without acceptable social, communication and advocacy skills, his future will be bleak no matter what hurdles he may overcome in the academic spectrum. The questionnaires completed by the students, parents and teachers were used as targets for discussion. Techniques for remediation varied from role playing, performing a critique on social skills films, modeling a learned skill, verbally explaining how one might handle a given situation, defining and illustrating positive and negative body language, and lastly, demonstrating the techniques of the give and take of good social conversations.

The sessions began with sterile situations taken from various social skills programs and progressed to

actual situations which were suggested by the LD students as areas of difficulty. As in other skills which we expect youngsters to learn, rehearsal and reinforcement is necessary. Therefore, the writer would manipulate the environment in order that the LD youngster would encounter a positive experience. For instance, if the writer and LD student were working on his advocacy skills, the writer would alert the guidance counselor that the LD student was coming to speak to him concerning exploration of colleges. The counselor was to take mental notes as to the tone of voice, body language, whether he was prepared with his questions and had paper/pencil to record his findings. Also, the writer requested that the counselor leave time to spend with the LD youngster so as to interact with him and also hopefully make this a positive experience. Similar simulated situations were arranged with teachers, secretaries and the principal. Feedback was reviewed and upon the next session without revealing the manipulation the writer would mention the topic in a global fashion and usually the LD youngster would convey how the meeting went. By obtaining the counselor's and the LD student's perspective, the writer had reason to congratulate the student for meeting a challenge or knew

which skills were in need of further remediation. The LD youngster was always commended for his follow-through on the task and any small accomplishments. Eventually, for some of the participants, the simulated situations were stopped and spontaneous comments were periodically obtained by the writer. If regression or triumph of a skill occurred, the writer would include this with the next session. At least once a month an individual society dilemma was discussed and an actual assignment was administered with specific instructions as to the correct way of implementing the skills. Role playing and rehearsing various possible scenarios were attempted to create self-confidence. The youngster would have to report his results and state what he learned and what he might change for the next encounter. These assignments were demanding but by having the strength of the group and a safe environment to falter at times, the opportunity for success was ever present.

The social, communication and advocacy skills were also reinforced at home. Through telephone conversations or actual conferences, the writer conveyed to the parents the necessity for their LD youngster to begin to assert his needs in a mature fashion. He was, for example, to be responsible for making appointments

for dentist or job interviews. He was to be expected to have paper and pencil ready to take down information and when he didn't copy all of it, ask politely to have parts repeated. He and his parents would practice the skills before he actually attempted them and the first few times the parent would be in close proximity to give assistance or encouragement. The families and youngsters come up with many challenging concepts, all of which were leading to the eventual empowerment of the LD young adult to become a responsible, productive, independent person.

Transition also is to be a collaborative effort with the community and outside agencies. With this in mind, the writer investigated the possibility of paralleling the LD student up with a member in the community whose professional endeavors were the same as the LD student's. The purpose was to establish a volunteer-mentoring situation where the LD youngster would be able to practice his newfound social, communication, grooming and advocacy skills and simultaneously learn about his prospective career. The community was very responsive and two LD youngsters had two conversations with the mentors while a third attended medical club meetings at a local hospital which

explored various aspects of the health professions. This is an area which warrants further study for the coming year.

In order for the learning disabled person to have productive, positive experiences, he must take control of his existence (Gerber, 1992). Since all five of the LD participants had aspirations of attending college, the group/individual sessions were also centered on their learning styles. Learning styles and accommodation questionnaires selected from Tools for Transition (AUNE, 1991) were utilized in order for these LD youngsters to learn strategies to manipulate and control their academic environment to work toward their optimum potential and advantage. The writer and LD young adults discussed and defined the various types and combinations of learning styles and attempted to equate them to the subject areas in which they had success or those areas which presented difficulties. After becoming aware of their learning styles, some exploration of the creativity they may require in order to experience success at a post-secondary level was discussed. Some had already developed their own style of taking notes, or used a recorder to review information and some color-coded items.

All these youngsters had taken a study skills course in their first year at the high school and had developed an awareness of techniques to improve study habits. The discussions also focused on their advocacy skills in actually requesting these accommodations. The group/individual sessions were finally generated through a questionnaire to role playing and reacting to ways one would approach a teacher for accommodations. Several of the LD young adults had and still do have a difficult time concerning self-disclosure once they leave high school. They feel strangers from other areas will reject them if they state they are learning disabled because they may think they are mentally retarded. This would limit their chances for a social life. To the writer this was a very sad commentary. The other three students knew they had no option but to disclose due to the number of accommodations they presently receive and will require in the future.

Simultaneously, while conducting the group/individual sessions and contacting volunteer mentors, the writer was also organizing the second annual Career/College Night. The parent support group assisted the writer, sending out approximately 150 letters to colleges, professionals, agencies and

technical schools, inviting representatives to attend this evening. This College/Career Night would emphasize the services available to learning disabled students to accommodate their needs and answer various questions from parents, teachers and LD students. Since transition planning should start at age 14, LD youngsters and parents from grades seven through twelve were invited (see Appendix I). In addition, this Career/College Night encompassed three counties in order to avail this valuable information to as many LD youngsters, parents and professionals as possible. Press releases and radio advertisements were initiated to stimulate attendance. Since the parent support group and the writer had worked together on this project last year, we attempted to improve upon the evening. First, we used a larger facility. Secondly, more four-year colleges were contacted, and thirdly, the local law enforcement agency was invited to attend.

The night of the Career/College Night signs were placed on tables identifying the college, technical school, agency or specific occupation. Refreshments were available, a brochure listing all the representatives, and a questionnaire to be completed by the participants to be examined later in order to

improve upon this project were distributed (see Appendix J). Written attendance was taken as participants entered, and the writer gathered the names of the various representatives in order to later send a thank-you note.

The major difference this year as opposed to the first Career/College Night was the utilization of the writer's five LD participants from the group/individual sessions, as hosts and hostesses. These youngsters were dressed in "Sunday best" attire and gave out questionnaires, walked around assisting people locate specific institutions, rest rooms, refreshment table, and answered any questions they could or found the writer if a problem arose. The writer and these LD youngsters had rehearsed these skills as well as attempted to anticipate any conflicts and how they might be handled. The LD youngsters did a commendable job. They even cleaned up at the end of the evening. Besides acquiring information concerning various colleges, technical schools and professions, they also gained self-confidence in their ability to converse with strangers.

The evening was a tremendous success again for the writer with over 40 representatives and approximately 230 people in attendance.

The transitional component of IDEA is a refreshing approach to what was a stagnating system for the LD population. From the developing of an ITP form, to providing information concerning careers, education, agencies and life functional skills, the writer with the cooperation of the five LD participants has implemented a viable ITP process. This type of cooperation and coordination by various groups is critical to decreasing the disheartening number of unemployed and underemployed as well as drop-outs from post-secondary institutions. This ITP stimulates creativity between school, community, agencies and home and above all gives hope and empowerment to families and young LD adults for a future of success as they move on to adult life.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

On October 30, 1990, President Bush signed into law the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) which mandated a transition component be addressed in the IEP. The problem at the writer's work site was a lack of coordinated effort between the Child Study Team, school personnel, community and agencies to produce a longitudinal plan to insure a successful transition from high school to the work force or post-secondary education for the learning disabled population. The IEP contained goals and objectives to remediate developmental academic delays but did not identify anticipated post-school outcomes and needed transition services required to prepare LD students for meaningful adult lives. The exit conference which was completed in the youngster's senior year was critically inadequate in addressing transitional issues. As a consequence, the

adolescent learning disabled population and their parents were left with many unanswered questions and a plan which was void of concrete possibilities for the future.

In order to eradicate this situation and offer parents and their LD youngsters a sense of hope for the future, the writer developed an in-depth Individual Transition Plan which was integrated into the IEP. Parents and LD youngsters filled out a questionnaire which addressed their concerns as well as interests and aspirations for the future. This questionnaire generated the substance for the ITP as well as giving the parents and LD youngster vested interest in the ITP. Each ITP is unique to the individual, containing realistic goals for career development, entrance to post-secondary education and enhancement of interpersonal skills. Responsibility for implementing specific actions and goals are clearly defined as well as set timelines for these actions to be completed.

By developing this ITP, the writer provided comprehensive information to the parents and the LD youngster in many areas. This information was utilized to provide a clear vision of the systematic steps the LD youngster must take to attain his future goals. Parents

now had an intricate document with a feasible longitudinal map toward accessible goals for their youngsters.

In addition, this ITP posed a picture which delineated strengths and weaknesses, focused on future potential and possibilities and presented the tools for empowerment to the LD youngster to be his own advocate when selecting future career or educational options.

Discussion

The major goal of this practicum is to develop an in-depth Individual Transitional Plan model to be implemented for learning disabled high school students. The goals of transition are to insure uninterrupted services and to determine plausible adult outcomes for future employment or secondary education. Transition planning enhances current educational programs and offers hope for the future through longitudinal strategies. To fulfill this outcome, original goals indigenous to the learning disabled population were developed and inputted into the computer as part of the current IEP but entitled ITP. A narrative component was added which emphasizes specific recommendations, the person responsible for implementing those recommendations and sets a viable timeline in which to

complete the designated transition goals (see Appendix F). This ITP shell was used to eventually generate five detailed ITPs for the participating LD young adults used in this practicum.

The first objective of this practicum was that the targeted LD students would demonstrate appropriate social, grooming, advocacy and communication skills for vocational and post-secondary educational success, which would ultimately lead to optimum functioning in the community. A transition questionnaire was generated by the writer to procure current information to be used as a baseline to determine concerns and address any deficits noted by the selected population in the ITP. These questionnaires were completed by all five LD participants and their families as well as teachers (see Appendices A, B, C, D, and E). It was stated by several families that this questionnaire actually centered around the first serious conversation that the family had concerning the LD youngster's future endeavors. These results were later used as pre-assessments and benchmarks when the writer organized group/individual sessions. These assessments were developed from a functional viewpoint. Respondents were requested to either actually observe the adolescent performing the

skill or recall from past experience the LD adolescent's performance. The results from parents and teachers were expected. Weaknesses were noted in the areas of social skills, advocacy, responsibility to school, work and home tasks, communicating their needs in an age-appropriate manner, and a poor self-image. The writer's findings concurred with those of Okolo (1988), Roffman (1991) and Payne (1991). A disturbing result was that of the vague conception the parents had concerning their youngster's disability and its impact on his future employment or higher educational goals. These types of responses only reinforced the critical requirement for an in-depth longitudinal transition plan.

An analysis of the LD students' responses indicated that they were less guarded and had high expectations for their futures. However, none had an extensive view of their learning style and four out of the five youngsters had not thought about accommodations they might require in a post-secondary environment or work force.

Since the acquisition of interpersonal skills and self-knowledge is an essential component for the ultimate success of the LD young adult to compete in the academic or employment arena, the writer required each

LD participant to attend a minimum of five group/ individual sessions throughout the school year.

The general topics in the sessions consisted of career planning, employment skills, social skills, communication and advocacy skills and learning styles. Techniques for remediation varied from role playing, modeling and rehearsing a learned behavior in a simulated situation such as in school or the home, illustrating positive and negative body language as well as demonstrating the techniques of the give and take of good social conversations. Discussions on various learning styles originated through the completion of work sheets.

The post assessment as well as verbal comments from parents and teachers revealed that most of the growth took place in the advocacy domain. The LD youngsters would ask for assistance from teachers, or requested to use computers in the guidance office to search a specific career or school. During the Career/College Night, these LD youngsters acted as hosts and hostesses and performed well. These youngsters were beginning to be prepared and anticipate how to handle various situations.

Another positive result of these group/individual sessions was the self-monitoring as well as group participation in role playing various situations. The entire interpersonal skills area was most difficult to remediate due to the fact that these LD young adults did not possess the behavioral repertoire to actually be cognizant that their social and communication skills were either irritating or grossly inappropriate to others. The writer was alarmed by this discovery with this group of LD youngsters because these participants were on the upper end of the spectrum. This indicated to the writer many more LD young adults in the high school would benefit from communication, social skills and advocacy instruction. After reviewing these results, the writer was thankful that four out of the five LD participants would be returning to school for one or two years. Much more work remained to be completed.

As a direct result of these findings, the writer has designated a portion of her work week for the coming year to concentrate on small group sessions replicated from this practicum. This service will be written into the ITP of prospective candidates and they will be given

a specific time and day to report to the writer. This schedule will eliminate inconsistent meetings.

After sharing these results with the writer's supervisor, permission was granted for the writer to develop a social skills curriculum over the next two years, to be infused into the regular curriculum. With such a collaborative effort, skills can be refined and the LD young adults will be more prepared to meet the challenge of social interactions.

The second objective of this practicum was to have the five LD participants evaluated to determine academic ability, aptitude and career interests which would assist them to develop realistic goals commensurate with these results. A collaborative vocational testing with the representative from DVR and the writer was performed on all five participants. These results gave the writer a path to follow as far as courses to encourage the LD student to take and also explore how directed the LD student was to achieve his career goals. In order to develop job-related skills, self-advocacy and social skills, the writer initiated a volunteer mentoring program in the community. The writer contacted several local employers who had occupations similar to those which the LD students had delineated through aptitude

and career interest testing. The community members were very responsive in their cooperation to the volunteer mentoring program. To the writer's amazement, the LD students were initially reluctant to volunteer. These students wanted to be paid for their services. The writer then explained the positive aspects of this type of situation. Finally, two youngsters did visit with the police department and a business office and spoke about the type of work, education required and how the mentor first became involved with this occupation. A third LD youngster attended several meetings at a local hospital and obtained information on various medical professions. The writer intends to explore this type of program for implementation in the next school year.

The final activity to enhance the transition from high school to the world of work or post-secondary situations was the second annual Career/College Night. This was again very successful. Over 200 people attended and 42 representatives answered questions and explained the various programs for the LD students and their families. The five LD participants practiced their social and communication skills by acting as hosts and hostesses.

The writer and the LD students later exchanged feelings concerning the evening and for the most part it was a positive experience. However, one student at the sign-in table stated he would have liked some help and felt overwhelmed when it became very crowded. Another student simply became tired of talking to all the people.

Due to this Career/College Night, two representatives from technical schools have accepted the invitation to speak in small groups with the LD students for next fall. This will give students who could not attend the Career/College Night an opportunity to have exposure to various types of training,in these institutions.

A review of the questionnaires indicated that the evening was a positive event. However, all the questionnaires were not returned and some people did not receive a questionnaire due to the reluctance of the LD student to distribute them once the facility became crowded.

Table 2

Result of the Career/College Night Evaluation

1. The information was helpful to you and your youngster.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
72	10	1	0

2. Presenters were knowledgeable concerning the needs of the LD student.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
68	7	8	0

3. This information will assist you and your student in future career planning.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
64	15	4	0

4. What would be done to improve this program?

   1. Have more four-year colleges.

   2. Have a separate night for agencies due to the wealth of information they have and the time is not provided for extensive conversations during Career/College Night.

5. What other topics would you like to see addressed concerning the learning disabled young adult?

   1. A timeline for students attempting to enter college.

   2. A list of LD colleges.

   3. Summer employment opportunities.

   4. Study skills.

As a direct consequence of the Career/College Night and transition planning, representatives from the local casino industry came to the school to recruit LD seniors into employment. Another very positive unexpected outcome of the transition planning was the development of field trips to sites which will provide career knowledge to the LD student. These field trips scheduled for next year will focus on local industries and businesses as well as local post-secondary educational facilities.

These various coordinated activities over the eight-month period gave credence to Individual Transition Plans developed for the five LD participants (see Appendix H). By executing extensive vocational testing by the writer and DVR, obtaining input from several sources in questionnaires concerning interpersonal skills, implementing a volunteer/mentoring program and the organization of the Career/College Night, the writer secured valid information to comprehend the LD student's preferences and needs. These findings were developed in the ITP through a collaborative manner with many people having a responsibility toward the LD young adult's future. This ITP was shared with the parents and the LD young adult

at the time of the annual IEP meeting. It was explained that this ITP is an on-going process and would be updated at least once a year if not before. Parents and LD youngsters now had a tangible report which they helped design. This ITP avails the LD the self-knowledge and a systematic approach to attaining his future goals.

Recommendations

The writer has three recommendations for the reader when duplicating this practicum:

1. When implementing the group/individual sessions, acknowledge how difficult some of these tasks might be, but know over time it will be well worth it.

2. Stay focused and don't allow pessimistic comments to deter your creativity and optimism.

3. Involve the parents, teachers, community members, agencies, and school administration whenever possible. This will give them a vested interest in seeing the LD youngster succeed.

Dissemination

Professionals from surrounding districts have requested copies of the Individual Transition Plan model in order that they may duplicate this process.

Currently, in most of the local districts no in-depth plan is in effect and they are anxious for materials. Once this practicum is approved, the writer intends on giving workshops to foster the implementation of this ITP model.

On May 13, the writer did present this practicum to the New Jersey Association of Federal Program Administrators (NJAFPA) at their spring conference.

The writer has been selected to present this practicum to the 15th International Conference on Learning Disabilities in Baltimore on October 8.

The writer has also submitted a proposal to the International Learning Disabilities Association to present this practicum at its conference in 1994.

The writer was requested to present this practicum at the Atlantic County Learning Disabilities Association in March 1994 and has accepted. This is a parent/ professional group and this transition model and additional information on the related laws will be valuable in preparing their LD students and young adults for future ventures.

No words could ever express the joy the writer has received from working this year with the five learning disabled participants for this practicum. They have

been instrumental in creating a valuable piece of literature for the empowerment of the learning disabled high school population.

A successful system of transitional programs and services depend upon the on-going coordination of services by agencies that are involved in education, community, living skills, and employment programs. This ITP model attempted to include all pertinent information in order to have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the LD young adult. As a result, this new comprehensive ITP model will hopefully curtail the fatalistic attitudes which many disabled young adults and their families currently possess concerning the transition process from high school. By developing the ITP model over four years, the LD young adult is assured of realistic and attainable future goals. This information in the ITP assists him in the decision-making process and empowers him to view life in an optimistic manner.

The writer is idealistic enough to hope that because a consortium of dedicated people come together and work for one cause it will make all the difference in the lives of the learning disabled population. As a result, the learning disabled young adult will exit high

school with dreams and the courage to make their visions come true. One never knows which technique or conversation will touch a human being, but when that magic moment happens, the writer is convinced that God truly smiles and all reach a state of happiness otherwise insurmountable.

The future of the learning disabled population is in our hands. May we all strive to make it meaningful and a benefit to society. The learning disabled population have much to give; they simply need the wind beneath their sails to help them fly.

REFERENCES

Aune, E. (1991). A transition model for postsecondary-bound students with learning disabilities. Learning Disabilities Research and Practice, 6, 177-187.

Aune, E., & Ness, J. (1991). Tools for Transition. Circle Pines, Minn.: American Guidance Service.

Brinckerhoff, L., Shaw, S., and McGuire, J. (1992). Promoting access, accommodations, and independence for college students with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25, 417-429.

Brown, J.M. (1987). Key factors that influence students' success in postsecondary vocational education programs. Journal of Career Development, 13, 4.

Castor, B. (1991). Technical assistance paper (No. FY 1991-4). Tallahassee, Florida: Florida Department of Education.

Elksnin, L., & Elksnin, N. (1991). The school counselor as job search facilitator: Increasing employment of handicapped students through job clubs. The School Counselor, 38 (3), 215-219.

Evelo, S., & Price, L. (1991). The transition of students with learning disabilities: A case study. Journal of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 9, 59-62.

Fad, K. (1990). The fast track to success: Social behavioral skills. Intervention and School and Clinic, 261(1), 39-43.

Gerber, P., Ginsberg, R., Reiff, H.B. (1992). Identifying alterable patterns in employment success for highly successful adults with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 25. 475-487.

Halpern, A. (1985). Transition: A look at the foundations. Exceptional Children, 51, 479-486.

Haring, K.A., Lovett, D.L., & Smith, D.D. (1990). A follow-up study of recent special education graduates of learning disabilities programs. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 23, 108-113.

Harris, L., & Associates (1986). ICD survey of disabled Americans: Bringing disabled Americans into the mainstream: A nationwide survey of 1,000 disabled people. New York, NY: International Center for the Disabled (ICD). (Available from ICD, 340 E. 24th Street, New York, NY 10010.)

Hasazi, S.B. (1985). Factors associated with the employment status of handicapped youth exiting high school from 1979 to 1983. Exceptional Children, 51, 455-469.

Hudson, P.J., Schwartz, S.E., Sealander, K.A., Campbell, P., & Hensei, J.W. (1988). Successfully employed adults with handicaps: Characteristics and transition strategies. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 11, 7-14.

Institute on Disability at the University of New Hampshire (1991). Fact sheet: Following the lives of young adults (Vol. 2 No. 1).

Knapp, R., & Knapp, L. (1981). COPSystem Interest Inventory. San Diego, California: Published by Edits.

Lehr, S. (1985). After school . . . then what? The transition to adulthood. Prepared for the Technical Assistance for Parent Programs (TAPP) Project, 312 Stuart Street, Second Floor, Boston, Massachusetts 02116.

National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (1991). The education of children and youth with special needs: What do the laws say? (Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 1-14). Washington, DC.

Okolo, C., & Sitlington, P. (1988, Winter). The role of special education in LD adolescents' transition from school to work. Learning Disability Quarterly, 11, 292-306.

Payne, N. (Feb. 1991). Designing reasonable accommodations in the workplace for the adult with learning disabilities. (Cassette Recording No. D131-T24.) Chicago, IL: International Learning Disabilities Association Conference.

Posthill, M., & Roffman, A. (1991). The impact of a transitional training program for young adults with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 24 (10), 619-629.

Roffman, A. (Feb. 1991). Establishing a household: Challenges and strategies for the young adult with learning disabilities. (Cassette Recording No. D131-T53.) Chicago, IL: International LD Association Conference.

Rojewski, J. (1992). Key components of model transition services for students with learning disabilities. Learning Disability Quarterly, 15, 135-150.

Rusch, F.R., & Phelps, L.A. (1987). Secondary special education and transition from school to work: A national priority. Exceptional Children, 53, 487-492.

Siegel, S., & Gaylord-Ross, R. (1991). Factors associated with employment success among youth with learning disabilities. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 24, 40-47.

Turnbull, A., & Turnbull, H. (1986). Families professionals and exceptionality. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.

United States Employment Service. (1970). General Aptitude Test Battery. Washington, DC: Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office.

Valdivieso, C.H. (1991). Options after school for youth with disabilities: Transition summary. NICHCY, 7, p. 1.

Wagner, M., & Shaver, D.M. (1989). The transition experiences of youth with disabilities: A report from the National Longitudinal Transitional Study. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. (Available from SRI International, 333 Ravenswood Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025.)

Weiss, H. (1974). A survival manual. Avon, Colorado: Treehouse Associates.

Zigmond, N. (1990). Rethinking secondary school programs for students with learning disabilities. Focus on Exceptional Children, 23 (1), 1-23.

APPENDIX A

STUDENT TRANSITION QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A

Questions for the Future

Student Questionnaire

1. What year do you anticipate you will graduate? _____

2. Do you know why you are receiving special education services? _____

3. Do you know how you learn best?_____ Explain _____

4. What program are you currently pursuing in high school?

   College Prep_____ Business_____

   Vocational Education_____ General_____

   Other_____

5. Have you had any job experience?_____Explain _____

6. Where do you want to work after you leave high school? _____

7. What kind of help might you need to get/keep a job after high school?
   Interview techniques_____
   Social skills training_____
   Job coach_____
   Advocacy training_____
   Filling out applications_____
   Other_____

8. Do you want to go to college or a vocational school after high school? _____

9. What kind of help might you need to go to school after you graduate?
   Financial aid_____ Academic accommodations _____
   Transportation_____ Study Skills _____
   Other_____

10. Have you investigated any post-secondary facilities _____
    Explain_____

11. What are your hobbies? _____

12. Do you have any medical concerns?_____

13. What duties do you have at home?_____

14. What is your dream for the future?_____

15. What are your fears concerning the future? _____

Any other comments:

APPENDIX B

PARENT/GUARDIAN TRANSITION QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX B

Parent/Guardian Transition Questionnaire

1. Do you understand the implications of your youngster's learning disability and his future employment or post-secondary education? Explain. _____
   _____
2. What is your concern for your son/daughter after graduation? _____
   _____
3. What type of employment situation do you think would be appropriate for your son/daughter?
   Competitive part-time_____
   Competitive full-time_____
   Other_____
4. Do you want your son/daughter to attend college or vocational school? _____
5. Have you and your youngster investigated any post-secondary academic facilities? _____Which ones? _____
6. Have you encouraged your youngster to obtain part-time employment? _____
7. What kind of assistance will your learning disabled son/daughter require to succeed in a post-secondary situation? _____
8. Will your son/daughter require assistance when he/she obtains employment? _____What kind? _____
9. Does your youngster have age appropriate friends and social skills? _____
   Explain_____
10. Does your youngster communicate his needs, disappointments in an age appropriate manner?_____ Explain_____
11. What duties does your youngster have at home?_____
12. What are your future dreams for your child? _____
    _____
13. What are your fears for your child's future? _____
    _____

Any other comments:_____Explain_____
_____

APPENDIX C

SOCIAL SKILLS

APPENDIX C

Social Skills

Student Name:_____ **Grade:**_____

A	B	C	D	Interpersonal Skills
				1. Participates in activities with opposite sex/same sex members
				2. Accepts constructive criticism from authority or peers
				3. Expresses disappointment/anger without aggression or yelling
				4. Maintains friendships over an extended period of time
				5. Understands the feelings of others
				6. Works independently
				7. Works in a group situation and shares responsibility
				8. Interacts appropriately with same sex authority figures
				9. Interacts appropriately with opposite sex authority figures
				10. Allows others to speak in a group without interruption
				11. Can take a compliment
				12. Can give a compliment

A = OUTSTANDING
B = SATISFACTORY
C = MARGINAL
D - NOT SATISFACTORY

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX D

GROOMING SKILLS

APPENDIX D

Grooming Skills

Student Name:_____ **Grade:** _____

A	B	C	D	Interpersonal Skills
				1. Clean body, including finger nails and teeth
				2. Clean, appropriate hair style for environment and time of day
				3. Clean and appropriate clothes and shoes, free of tears
				4. Clothing fits properly; not too tight or too loose
				5. Body weight is not too thin or too heavy
				6. Female: Makeup appropriate for environment and the time of day
				7. Male: Clean shaven or neatly trimmed beard or mustache
				8. Displays good standing and sitting posture

A = OUTSTANDING
B = SATISFACTORY
C = MARGINAL
D - NOT SATISFACTORY

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

APPENDIX E

Communication Skills

Student Name:_____ **Grade:**_____

A	B	C	D	Interpersonal Skills
				1. Tone of voice age appropriate not too loud or too soft
				2. Uses proper grammar free from slang and profanity
				3. Establishes eye contact with the person speaking
				4. Maintains acceptable proximity when speaking to another
				5. Rate of speech is age appropriate
				6. Initiates conversation, greets people and introduces self
				7. Listens to directions and follows through correctly
				8. Is able to read non-verbal body language
				9. Expresses feelings negative and positive appropriately
				10. Can ask for help from peers and authority figures.

A = OUTSTANDING
B = SATISFACTORY
C = MARGINAL
D - NOT SATISFACTORY

Additional Comments:

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F

INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN

APPENDIX F

Individual Transition Plan

ITP Goals Assimilated into the Students' Individual Educational Plan

I. Transition Plan

A. For pupils aged 14 and over, consideration is given in the goals and objectives of the basic plan and in the instructional guide for activities preparing the pupil for post-secondary programs, work settings, adult services and independent living. The case manager will serve as the active agent in referring the pupil for necessary agency services and special goals and objectives will be appended if appropriate.

1. _____ To pass Basic English
2. _____ To pass Basic Math (TP)
3. _____ To pass Consumer Math (TP)
4. _____ To pass Career Exploration I (TP)
5. _____ To pass Career Exploration II (TP)
6. _____ To pass Introduction to Vocations (TP)
7. _____ To pass Applied Sociology (TP)
8. _____ To improve test taking strategies (TP)
9. _____ To pass Study Skills (TP)

II. To Explore Employment Options

A. Explore Career Options

1. _____ Job shadow three businesses of interest
2. _____ Participate in two volunteer work experiences
3. _____ Interview worker in career area of interest
4. _____ Tour supported employment programs
5. _____ Enroll in Careers class and participate in related work experiences
6. _____ Attend College/Career Night

B. Obtain Employment

1. _____ Contact job developer
2. _____ Write/update resume
3. _____ Practice interview skills
4. _____ Contact and apply to three businesses
5. _____ Keep records of job search
6. _____ Apply for Job Service assistance
7. _____ Check with Job Service personnel one time per week for possible job lead
8. _____ Explore communication skills

C. Assess Vocational Interests

1. _____ Complete vocational assessment
2. _____ Review vocational aptitude scores with instructor or counselor
3. _____ Complete an interest inventory
4. _____ Self-assess vocational abilities and interests after completing work samples
5. _____ Shadow a vocational program/business and access necessary skills
6. _____ Collect assessment data

D. Participate in Vocational Options

1. _____ Shadow Vo-Tech program for two days
2. _____ Contact Vocational Rehabilitation to determine eligibility
3. _____ Tour a Vo-Tech school
4. _____ Identify a vocational program which would meet personal needs
5. _____ Take vocational aptitude test
6. _____ Participate in intermediate/high school vocational program

III. To Explore Residential Options

A. Live independently

1. _____ Take Home Economics
2. _____ Review a lease
3. _____ Determine personal needs/limitations in a living situation
4. _____ Visit two apartments for rent
5. _____ Look through ads and choose three possible living options
6. _____ Explore dorm possibilities on campus of choice
7. _____ Cook dinner one time per week
8. _____ Develop a personal budget
9. _____ Open a checking/savings account
10. _____ Visit a group home

B. Travel Independently

1. _____ Obtain a driver's license
2. _____ Find co-worker with whom to ride
3. _____ Compare cost; purchase liability insurance
4. _____ Complete driver's education training
5. _____ Explore transportation option in nearest city
6. _____ Purchase a car

C. Become Aware of Support Agencies & Services

1. _____ Identify counseling/support needs
2. _____ Determine appropriate community resources to meet counseling/support needs
3. _____ Initiate counseling; attend support meetings

D. Medical Support

1. _____ Identify helping professionals in medical field
2. _____ Contact/locate medical assistance agencies in area of need
3. _____ Apply for Medicaid/appropriate medical resources in community
4. _____ Determine medical needs
5. _____ Determine appropriate questions to ask medical professional
6. _____ Visit/research local community health services
7. _____ Design a file with all pertinent medical information

IV. To Explore Post-Secondary Options

A. Education Options

1. _____ Complete and submit financial aid packet
2. _____ Contact career learning center to determine options
3. _____ Work with counselor/instructor to determine credits
4. _____ Contact/visit college of choice
5. _____ Contact guidance counselor to determine most appropriate high school classes to take to reach long-term goal
6. _____ Review three post-secondary catalogs
7. _____ Take SAT exam
8. _____ Determine learning style
9. _____ Evaluate study skills

B. Financial Assistance

1. _____ Determine all possible financial resources available
2. _____ Call identified financial resources to determine eligibility requirements
3. _____ Parent/guardian should make application to Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) to explore available services
4. _____ Parent/guardian should make application to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to explore available services

5. _____ Parent/guardian should make application to the Division of Developmental Disabilities to explore available services

V. To Participate in Community Leisure Programs

A. Leisure Programs/Activities

1. _____ Identify local recreation options
2. _____ Visit/contact three recreation options
3. _____ Determine cost, rules, and hours of recreation option of interest
4. _____ Participate in a specific recreation activity
5. _____ Explore school activities/sports

Narrative Action Plan

Recommendations	Person/Persons Responsible	Time Line

Comments

_____

_____

_____

_____

Case Manager

APPENDIX G

TRANSITION

APPENDIX G

Transition

Dear Parents/Guardian:

In order to better prepare your youngster for the transition from high school to post-secondary education or the work force, _____ of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and I would like to evaluate your young adult to ascertain their interest in Vocational exploration. Our goal is to assist these young people to explore their strengths/weaknesses; investigate vocation options and to guide them toward appropriate transitional plans.

Enclosed please find a release form, giving your young adult permission to be involved in this experience. Please sign where indicated and return as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, please contact _____. Thank you for your continued assistance.

Sincerely,

_____

I give my permission to have my son/daughter evaluated by the representative of DVR to ascertain information for his/her transition plan.

_____

Parent's Signature

APPENDIX H

INDIVIDUAL TRANSITION PLAN

STUDENT M

APPENDIX H

Individual Transition Plan

Student M

I. Transition Plan

A. For pupils aged 14 and over, consideration is given in the goals and objectives of the basic plan and in the instructional guide for activities preparing the pupil for post-secondary programs, work settings, adult services and independent living. The case manager will serve as the active agent in referring the pupil for necessary agency services and special goals and objectives will be appended if appropriate.

1.	_____	To pass Basic English
2.	_____	To pass Basic Math (TP)
3.	_____	To pass Consumer Math (TP)
4.	_____	To pass Career Exploration I (TP)
5.	_____	To pass Career Exploration II (TP)
6.	_____	To pass Introduction to Vocations (TP)
7.	_____	To pass Applied Sociology (TP)
8.	X	To improve test taking strategies (TP)
9.	_____	To pass Study Skills (TP)

II. To Explore Employment Options

A. Explore Career Options

1.	_____	Job shadow three businesses of interest
2.	X	Participate in two volunteer work experiences
3.	_____	Interview worker in career area of interest
4.	_____	Tour supported employment programs
5.	_____	Enroll in Careers class and participate in related work experiences
6.	X	Attend College/Career Night

B. Obtain Employment

1.	_____	Contact job developer
2.	_____	Write/update resume
3.	X	Practice interview skills
4.	_____	Contact and apply to three businesses
5.	_____	Keep records of job search
6.	_____	Apply for Job Service assistance
7.	_____	Check with Job Service personnel one time per week for possible job lead
8.	X	Explore communication skills

C. Assess Vocational Interests

1. _____ Complete vocational assessment
2. __X__ Review vocational aptitude scores with instructor or counselor
3. _____ Complete an interest inventory
4. __X__ Self-assess vocational abilities and interests after completing work samples
5. _____ Shadow a vocational program/business and access necessary skills
6. _____ Collect assessment data

D. Participate in Vocational Options

1. _____ Shadow Vo-Tech program for two days
2. __X__ Contact Vocational Rehabilitation to determine eligibility
3. _____ Tour a Vo-Tech school
4. _____ Identify a vocational program which would meet personal needs
5. _____ Take vocational aptitude test
6. _____ Participate in intermediate/high school vocational program

III. To Explore Residential Options

A. Live independently

1. _____ Take Home Economics
2. _____ Review a lease
3. __X__ Determine personal needs/limitations in a living situation
4. _____ Visit two apartments for rent
5. _____ Look through ads and choose three possible living options
6. __X__ Explore dorm possibilities on campus of choice
7. __X__ Cook dinner one time per week
8. _____ Develop a personal budget
9. _____ Open a checking/savings account
10. _____ Visit a group home

B. Travel Independently

1. __X__ Obtain a driver's license
2. _____ Find co-worker with whom to ride
3. _____ Compare cost; purchase liability insurance
4. __X__ Complete driver's education training
5. _____ Explore transportation option in nearest city
6. _____ Purchase a car

C. Become Aware of Support Agencies & Services

1. ___X___ Identify counseling/support needs
2. _____ Determine appropriate community resources to meet counseling/support needs
3. _____ Initiate counseling; attend support meetings

D. Medical Support

1. _____ Identify helping professionals in medical field
2. _____ Contact/locate medical assistance agencies in area of need
3. _____ Apply for Medicaid/appropriate medical resources in community
4. _____ Determine medical needs
5. _____ Determine appropriate questions to ask medical professional
6. _____ Visit/research local community health services
7. ___X___ Design a file with all pertinent medical information

IV. To Explore Post-Secondary Options

A. Education Options

1. _____ Complete and submit financial aid packet
2. _____ Contact career learning center to determine options
3. _____ Work with counselor/instructor to determine credits
4. ___X___ Contact/visit college of choice
5. ___X___ Contact guidance counselor to determine most appropriate high school classes to take to reach long-term goal
6. ___X___ Review three post-secondary catalogs
7. ___X___ Take SAT exam
8. ___X___ Determine learning style
9. ___X___ Evaluate study skills

B. Financial Assistance

1. ___X___ Determine all possible financial resources available
2. _____ Call identified financial resources to determine eligibility requirements
3. _____ Parent/guardian should make application to Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) to explore available services
4. ___X___ Parent/guardian should make application to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to explore available services

5. _____ Parent/guardian should make application to the Division of Developmental Disabilities to explore available services

V. To Participate in Community Leisure Programs

A. Leisure Programs/Activities

1. __X__ Identify local recreation options
2. _____ Visit/contact three recreation options
3. _____ Determine cost, rules, and hours of recreation option of interest
4. __X__ Participate in a specific recreation activity
5. __X__ Explore school activities/sports

Narrative Action Plan

Recommendations	Person/Persons Responsible	Time Line
1) Three times a week attend a study skills class	Student, teacher	1992-93 school year
2) Contact local hospital for volunteer situation	Student, parent, writer	1992-93
3) Attend College/Career Night	Student, parent	Spring 1993
4) Attend at least 6 group/individual sessions to improve communication, advocacy, social skills	Student, writer	Fall 1992 till June 1993
5) Investigate employment possibility	Representative of DVR, writer, student, parent	Dec. 1992 till June 1993
6) Obtain driver's license	Student, driver education teacher	5-week period Spring 1993
7) Visit two colleges of choice	Parent, student	Summer 1993
8) Arrange to take untimed SAT	Parent, student, writer, guidance	March 1993
9) Participant in one leisure activity in community or school	Student, parent, writer	Continuous through high school years

Comments

M. is a junior who is in the college preparatory classes. His interests and aptitude lie in the medical field. He performs well in the academic arena; however, his social skills, advocacy and communication skills are delayed when compared to young adolescents his age. He associates with younger people and is not involved in school or community activities. M. is very dependent on his parents and needs to develop a sense of responsibility to follow through on tasks and anticipate unexpected outcomes and deadlines before they occur.

M. has not ever been employed nor does he have his license due to his lack of confidence and inability to advocate for himself. A volunteer/mentoring situation in the medical field will be investigated as well as actual summer employment. These situations will assist M. in gaining confidence in his abilities and improve his social and advocacy skills. Throughout the school year, the writer will hold individual sessions with M. to demonstrate techniques to enhance these abilities.

M. is a fine young man who has high aspirations to enter the medical field. These transitional plans have been prepared with his interests in focus. By encompassing the school, home, community, outside agencies and M. we hope to increase his knowledge and skills in order to better prepare him for his ultimate transition to adult life.

APPENDIX I

CAREER/COLLEGE LETTER

APPENDIX I

Career/College Letter

March 17, 1993

Dear Parents:

Attached is notice of a CAREER/COLLEGE information night planned for Wednesday, March 31, 1993 - 7 to 9 PM (to be held at the Intermediate School). This event was held last year with very positive results.

Schools of higher education have been invited for the purpose of providing information concerning academic entrance requirements; community agencies will explain their services available; Army, Navy and Air Force recruiters will discuss their acceptance requirements; and local businesses have been invited to explain the education and training necessary for entrance into their field of work.

Attached is a list of participants. We hope you and your young adult will be able to attend.

Sincerely,

APPENDIX J

EVALUATION FOR CAREER NIGHT

APPENDIX J

Evaluation for Career Night

March 31, 1993

1. The information was helpful to you and your youngster.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
_____	_____	_____	_____

2. Presenters were knowledgeable concerning the needs of the LD student.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
_____	_____	_____	_____

3. This information will assist you and your student in future career planning.

Excellent	Average	Fair	Poor
_____	_____	_____	_____

4. What could be done to improve this program?

5. How did you find out about this career night?

Newspaper_____ Letter from school_____
Telephone_____ Other_____

6. What other topics would you like to see addressed concerning the learning disabled young adult?

7. Do you have a talent, occupation, etc., that you would be interested in sharing with LD students?

Name_____ Phone_____

8. The person filling out this form:

Teacher_____Guidance_____ Other_____

Student_____Parent_____